

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 DODE-00 EURE-00 DRC-01 RSC-01

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P 101215Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5060

COMSCELM BREMERHAVEN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 2430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, MT, US

SUBJ: USNS WYMAN CLEARANCE REQU*ST

REF: STATE 240220

1. WE HAD DELAYED SUBMITTING NOTE IN HOPES WE COULD INCLUDE THEREIN OFFER OF PROGRAM ON BOARD WYMAN FOR INTERESTED MALTESE SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF PASSAGE OF TIME WE HAVE NOW SUBMITTED NOTE WITH FOLLOWING RESULTS.

2. NOTE HANDED TO MAURICE ABELA, SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO ASK WHERE WYMAN'S RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WOULD BE TAKING PLACE, AND SOME DETAILS ON NATURE OF RESEARCH.

3. IN DISCUSSION, ABELA SAID MALTA IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT ANY HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH NOT ONLY WITHIN TERRITORIAL WATERS, BUT WITHIN A*EA ON MALTA'S SIDE OF LIBYA-MALTA MEDIAN LINE. THIS SENSITIVITY IS RELATED MORE SPECIFICALLY TO SEABED AND SUB-SEABED RESOURCES, E.G. PETROLEUM AND MINERALS. WHEN ASKED, ABELA DID NOT EXPRESS SAME RESERVATIONS ABOUT FISHERIES, CURRENTS, DEPTH SOUNDING OR SIMILAR ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO INDICATED MUCH LESS SENSITIVITY ON AREAS IN*DIRECTION OF MEDIAN LINES WITH TUNISIA AND ITALY. HE NOTED THAT MALTA HAD TURNED DOWN A FRENCH REQUEST FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN MDINA BANK AREA WHERE POTENTIAL PETROLEUM SITES ARE NOW UNDER AUCTION.

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4. ABELA SAID HE WOULD NOT SUBMIT REQUEST TO PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE PENDING OUR REPLY TO THESE QUESTIONS.

5. DURING DISCUSSION, WE ALSO NOTED THAT TWO SOVIET MARINE RESEARCH VESSELS HAD VISITED MALTA DURING PAST YEAR, AND INQUIRED AS TO WHETHER GOM HAD RECEIVED SIMILAR ASSURANCES FROM SOVIETS. ABELA AT FIRST PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THESE VISITS, BUT WHEN HIS ASSISTANT CONFIRMED THAT SOVIET VESSELS HAD BEEN IN VALLETTA HARBOR, ABELA SAID HE HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION. WE SUGGESTED HE CHECK THIS POINT. IN PASSING, ABELA ALSO NOTED VERY LIMITED MALTESE CAPABILITY OF ENFORCING ITS WILL. ON OTHER HAND, WITHOUT ASSURANCES GOM MAY DENY ENTRY.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST CONSCERM TO PROVIDE REQUIRED INFORMATION.GETZ

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